

Veterans of the USA will hold their 50th anniversary convention May 5-7, in Sandusky, OH.

The city of Sandusky is a community renowned for its civic pride and commitment to service. It is an appropriate host to this most special of guests, the Catholic War Veterans. As a veteran myself, I am aware of the exemplary service rendered by groups such as the CWV. Throughout its history there has never been a lack of enthusiasm or volunteer labor for its many projects.

Several years ago, I was honored to be chosen Outstanding Legislator of the Year by the Department of Ohio, Catholic War Veterans. It is one of the most cherished honors I have received in my years of public service.

Anniversaries are a time to reflect upon past accomplishments. They are also a time to look toward new horizons. The Catholic War Veterans have made it their responsibility to serve those in need by keeping pace with the ever increasing challenges facing mankind.

It is obvious that the people of Ohio and our Nation as a whole have greatly benefited from the effort that was started in 1945. I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the achievements of the Department of Ohio, Catholic War Veterans and encourage them to continue to build upon their proud tradition of service in Ohio.

CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 1995

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to honor a few very important people from eastern Long Island. Mike Leonardi, Rita Rech, Terri Germano, and Paul Casiano will all be honored on Friday May 5, 1995 for their exemplary service to the community by receiving the Bay Area Civic Association's Third Annual Citizen of the Year Award. Each of these individuals has distinguished themselves in the community in his or her own way. Mike Leonardi is not only the Mastic Beach fire commissioner, but an assistant to the Brookhaven Town Council. Rita Rech is an active member of both the Bay Area Civic Association and the Mastic Park Civic Association. She embodies the true volunteer spirit in all of her activities. Beyond her service to eastern Long Island as a library employee, Terri Germano has dedicated time to the coordination of events for the Smith Point Beach Youth Project. Paul Casiano, as principal of Moriches Elementary School, has led them to become a National School of Excellence. Throughout his career, Paul Casiano has been an important link between his students and the community participating in both community and district activities. I would like to commend these dedicated members of the Long Island community for their service and dedication. We are proud and lucky to have them as neighbors.

TRIBUTE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS NATIONWIDE

HON. WILLIAM F. CLINGER, JR.

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 1995

Mr. CLINGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the law enforcement officers who serve and protect our communities in Pennsylvania and across the Nation.

It is appropriate today to recognize these brave men and women, especially those in the Keystone State, because today is the 90th anniversary of the Pennsylvania State Police. The first police organization of its kind, the Pennsylvania State Police was born of legislation that was signed into law by Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker on May 2, 1905.

In speaking with many of my colleagues in the House, I know that the Pennsylvania State Police enjoy an excellent reputation throughout the country—especially for their vigilance in maintaining safe highway travel. I have even had a few staffers who, in their enthusiasm to arrive at events in the Fifth Congressional District on time, have come to fully appreciate the keenness of their watchful eyes.

But while ensuring safe going for motorists is one of our police officers' most commonly known duties, it only scratches the surface of their tremendous breadth of responsibility. In northwestern and northcentral Pennsylvania, we are appreciative of and committed to the rural way of life. By maintaining safe streets and peaceful neighborhoods, our State and local officers of the law contribute invaluable to the preservation of our heritage.

On this special day, I rise to honor those who serve, those who have served, and those who have given their lives to protect our families, neighborhoods and friends. They are deserving of our most sincere thanks, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to recognize them here today.

IN MEMORY OF PAUL MARUYAMA

HON. RICHARD A. GEPHARDT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 1995

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a man who was a true American—a man who truly believed in and lived the ideals of this country—his name was Paul Maruyama.

He came to the United States from Japan in 1934 to complete his education. Shortly after the start of World War II he and his wife Mary were given 48 hours to sell their possessions and report for internment in a camp—they were both American citizens. During relocation after the war, Paul and his family settled in St. Louis.

Paul spent the rest of his life in St. Louis working to make our community a better place to live. He became an importer of Japanese products and a consultant for Japanese and American companies who desired to do business in each other's country. He was given the title of "Goodwill Ambassador" for his work in promoting friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and his adopted country.

The list of his civic accomplishments is too long to enumerate but include: the founding of the Japan-American Society of St. Louis, serving as the honorary Consul-General of Japan, establishing the St. Louis Chapter of the Japanese-American Citizens League, conducting citizenship classes for Japanese who wanted to become citizens, and the establishment of the Sister Cities Program between Suwa City, Japan and St. Louis.

Paul's legacy is faith—faith in the values and ideals of this country. He never let his mistreatment during the war affect his attitude. He always believed this was the greatest nation in the world and loved and supported his adopted country every day. The St. Louis community has lost a good friend in Paul Maruyama—the United States of America has lost a true patriot.

TRIBUTE TO LEROY F. SMITH

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 1995

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of Leroy F. Smith, a man who has contributed greatly to the community of Brooklyn, NY. Mr. Smith is a graduate of the New York public school system. He attended Boys High School in Brooklyn, and received a B.B.A. from Brooklyn College and his M.B.A. from the University of South Carolina.

Leroy has combined his academic training with community activism and professional experience to make meaningful contributions to my congressional district and greater Brooklyn.

Mr. Smith works tirelessly. Currently he serves as the president of a Bedford Stuyvesant tenant association, in addition to being the president of the Williamsburg-Throop-Marcus Garvey Blvd. Block Association. He is also a member of the 79th Precinct Community Council and the Willoughby Square Corporation. His past endeavors included service on the board of directors for the Bedford Stuyvesant Community Legal Services Corporation, and he is past president of various PTA organizations at Satellite East J.H.S., O.S. 44, and J.H.S. 258. Additionally, Mr. Smith served as a legislative aide to Assemblyman William F. Boyland, and he was one of 13 members of the Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality [CORE] who walked 250 miles to attend the 1973 March on Washington.

I am pleased to introduce Leroy Smith to my House colleagues and to congratulate him for his valuable service to the community.

ARON S. EGNER WINS AMERICAN LEGION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL CONTEST

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 1995

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, the American Legion High School Oratorical Contest was

established in 1938 with the purpose of helping high school students develop a deeper understanding of the U.S. Constitution. In the last 37 years, no student from New York State has won the competition. That is, until this year, when Aron S. Egner of Ballston Lake, NY, delivered the prize-winning speech, thus earning an \$18,000 college scholarship.

Each year, the American Legion awards a total of \$138,000 in scholarship prizes across the country in oratorical contests. Through these efforts, the American Legion accomplishes a twofold goal. First, through the preparation of delivery of their speeches, the participants develop extensive knowledge of such important topics as the U.S. Constitution and also hone their public speaking skills. Second, the prize money earned by the winners facilitates their obtaining a college education, and thus becoming contributive members of society. With his oratorical excellence, Aron S. Egner has proven that he is already well on his way to realizing the hopes held for him by the American Legion.

Aron is a senior at Schenendehowa High School in Clifton Park, NY. He participated in other American Legion programs during the year, becoming Governor of New York in the Boys State Program and the Attorney General in Boys Nation. In the Oratorical Competition, Aron's speech, entitled "Choosing Democracy," was judged best among those delivered by approximately 30,000 students from across the Nation. The speech eloquently and lucidly discusses the American citizen's privilege and obligation to vote in elections.

Mr. Speaker, Aron has already been recognized for his achievements by the American Legion. I ask that you and all Members join me as I submit Aron Egner's prize-winning speech to the RECORD and extend to him my heartiest congratulations on this impressive achievement, as well as best wishes in all of his future endeavors. I know we'll be hearing great things from this young man for many years to come.

AMERICAN LEGION SPEECH AND ORATORICAL
CONTEST—1994

CHOOSING DEMOCRACY
(By Aron Egner)

Most of us don't appreciate what we have—until we lose it.

We take our health for granted—until we become ill or injured.

We count on a steady family income—until a family member is laid off.

We just assume electricity will always be available—until that storm knocks out power to our homes.

Too many Americans today also take our nation's Constitution for granted. What, they wonder, does a document written over 200 years ago—by a bunch of guys in powdered wigs—have to do with life in the 1990s?

The answer: everything.

Just as electricity powers everything in our homes: our T.V.'s, stereos, lights, and appliances, the Constitution is the engine that powers the American way of life.

The Constitution makes America: America. A free nation that operates under majority rule while preserving minority rights. A nation where the rule of law reigns supreme. A nation where you can criticize the government—and not go to jail or face a firing squad. Where you can worship or not worship God in any way you choose. Where government is the servant of the people—and not the other way around.

In the world of 1787—a world ruled by kings, queens emperors and czars—those

Founding Fathers in powdered wigs came up with a new way of selecting leaders: elections.

They did this because they believed in the revolutionary statement at the heart of the Declaration of Independence: " * * * Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Of all the rights guaranteed in the Constitution, none is more important than the right to vote for our leaders. It is this right that is the foundation for all our other liberties.

Voting makes us the masters of our fate, giving us the ability to bring leaders to power, or force them out of office.

It sends a strong, clear message to everyone who desires to govern us: that we, the people, are the true rulers. We can elect you or we can defeat you. You must respond to our needs and govern us well, or you will not remain in power.

Back in 1787, no other nation on earth was governed this way. But from that point on, the U.S. Constitution became the inspiration for all people who wanted to live in freedom.

Today, democracy—inspired by the U.S. Constitution—is on the rise around the world.

The Communism of the Soviet Union, fashioned by Lenin and Stalin, has been replaced by fledgling democracies. Democracy has also supplanted dictatorships in Eastern Europe. And after finally winning the vote, the black majority in South Africa has elected Nelson Mandela.

But ironically, as we see news programs and newspapers filled with stories of the triumph of democracy around the globe, many of our own citizens aren't exercising their right to vote.

The Committee for the Study of the American Electorate found that in the 1992 elections, only 55 percent of eligible voters cast ballots.

Even more troubling, only 37 percent of American citizens between the ages of 18 and 24 voted.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who led the American people in a world war to preserve democracy, told the people of our nation in a 1944 radio address: "Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote, except the American people themselves—and the only way they could do that is by not voting."

Democracy is not a spectator sport. The right to vote is useless if we don't take advantage of it.

Throughout history, Americans have worked, and fought, and died to preserve and expand their right to vote.

Originally, the Constitution gave states broad discretion in deciding who could vote. African-Americans were excluded from democracy's promise. Women were also denied the vote. And states imposed poll taxes and set other qualifications to keep even some white men out of the voting booth.

After the long, bloody struggle of the Civil War nearly tore our nation apart, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery. The 14th and 15th Amendments gave blacks citizenship and the right to vote, and the 24th Amendment—not ratified until 1964—outlawed disqualifying voters for failing to pay poll taxes or other taxes.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law, helping to ensure that black Americans could exercise their Constitutional right to vote. He said at the time: "The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice."

Women protested and demonstrated for years before the 19th Amendment to the Con-

stitution was ratified in 1920, finally awarding them suffrage.

And in 1971, a long campaign by young people and their allies resulted in the ratification of the 26th Amendment, lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.

None of these amendments was achieved easily.

But they are given up easily—each and every time an American fails to vote.

Some people ask: Why is voting so important? When millions of ballots are cast, who's going to miss mine?

The answer is that citizenship in the United States imposes responsibilities as well as rights. And the ultimate responsibility we have is to preserve our rights. Not all of us can serve in the armed forces, run for public office, or work in government. But all of us—from age 18 on—have a responsibility to vote, to safeguard our liberty and the liberty of generations unborn. When you think of all the brave American soldiers who gave their lives to preserve our democratic way of life, it's hard to consider standing in line at the voting booth much of a sacrifice.

Other people say all the candidates are worthless; a bunch of crooked, useless politicians.

But that's a poor excuse. Life is filled with choices: what meal to eat, what college or trade school to go to, what career to pursue, even what car to buy. Seldom—if ever—is one of these choices the embodiment of sheer perfection. We choose, nevertheless, from the available alternatives. We use our judgment to decide which choice is best—or at least, the lesser of two evils.

Those who fail to vote have no right to complain about the failings of our government, because they have failed in the most elemental duty of citizenship. They are turning their backs on freedom.

Each of us has an obligation to vote, and society's institutions—the media, our government and our schools—need to do a better job of hammering home that message.

The media need to show us the good side of politics and government, and not just the bad. They must help us recapture the idealism that swept the nation when John F. Kennedy was president. Too often today, we instead view government as the corrupt conspiracy depicted in Oliver Stone's fictional "JFK."

Government must make voting easier. It should allow same-day registration of voters. It should make it possible for more people to vote by absentee ballot. Elections could be held over several days, to give more people time to go to the polls and reduce long lines. In addition, government should establish public financing of campaigns to reduce the influence of big money special interests.

Our schools need to bring social studies classes alive, by emphasizing student participation and involving young people in the study of current events. Students should hold mock election campaigns and stage debates. They should conduct mock Congressional and legislative sessions, like those held by the Boys and Girls State and Nation programs. Students should be encouraged not just to study yesterday's history, although that is important, but to make tomorrow's history by voting, learning about, and participating 1st hand in the political process. These are the lessons we should, we need, to teach.

Today, our power to elect our leaders is as important as it was when those guys in powdered wigs created our Constitution more than 200 years ago.

The message of the Constitution is timeless: vote as if your entire way of life depended on it. Why? Because it does.